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FRENCH MILITARY POLICY
by Pierre Messmer, Minister of Defense

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FRENCH MILITARY POLICY

[Following is the translation of an article by Pierre Messmer, Minister of Defense, in the French-language magazine Revue de Defense Nationale (National Defense Review), Paris, May 1963, pages 745-761.]

Military policy consists in defining, organizing, equipping, and training our armed forces for battle; it is an important and, in time of war, an essential component of defense policy and it can be understood only by those who are familiar with the often stated principles of that policy.

As part of my topic here today, I will describe first of all the forces or, more specifically, the weapons systems which we have or which we want to have, as well as the organization of their command setup; from these considerations I will then derive the requirements accruing to our armies as part of our program; in conclusion I will discuss the effects of our military policy on the country, in time of peace.

Very soon, France will have three weapons systems. The first weapons system is the strategic nuclear force (often called striking force); it is the mission of this force to act as deterrent and, if this deterrent function should fail, to hit designated enemy targets with the most powerful nuclear weapons as quickly as possible. The two basic technical components of this force are the bomb or the nuclear warhead and the means of delivery (bombers or rockets); in addition to these we have launch pads, communications facilities, and miscellaneous equipment.

The first generation of our strategic nuclear force will consist of 50 Mirage IV bombers with a speed of up to Mach 2 and with a wartime mission range of 2,500 km without refueling and 4,800 km with in-flight refueling by C-135 tankers. Each aircraft will carry one type A bomb -- that is to say, a fission bomb -- with a power equivalent to 50 or 60 KT of TNT (three times the power of the Hiroshima bomb); the

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prototype of this bomb has been tested successfully on 1 May 1962 in the Sahara. The first aircraft equipped with the first bombs will be operational before the end of 1963; the 50th aircraft will be delivered at the end of 1966.

This first generation will be essentially characterized by atomic bombs and aircraft (both of which can be further improved so that their useful employment can be prolonged); it will be followed, starting in 1968-1969, by a second generation which will consist of thermo-nuclear weapons and rockets. If we want to make thermo-nuclear weapons, we will have to have uranium highly enriched with isotope 235; but this will not be possible until after the isotope separation plant, now under construction at Pierrelatte, has been completed, which should happen around the beginning of 1967.

The rocket planned for this thermo-nuclear warhead is now in the research stage; it will be a ballistic rocket with a range of 3,000 km and with suitable accuracy. The rocket will consist of two stages, powered by the combustion of blocks of powder; it will have its own inertial guidance system which will steer it to the target and either keep it on or change its chosen trajectory.

Once we have the rocket and the nuclear warhead, we will have to select the proper launch pad from which the rocket can be fired; this will be a land, naval, aerial, or spacial platform. The decision here depends on technical as well as strategic, and hence also political factors. Technically, launching from a land platform, mobile or fixed and, in this case often underground, would be the simplest and the most economical solution; militarily and politically this is not without inconvenience for a relatively small country such as France. This is why the nuclear-powered submarine has been chosen as the launch platform. We are planning to have three submarines, each carrying 16 missiles; the first, for which orders have just been placed with the shipyard, should be operational in 1969; the other two should follow at 2-year intervals, depending on the decisions made in connection with their construction. We are also studying the idea of launching a rocket from an aerial platform but no decision has been made on this as yet.

If we want to understand the organization of the nuclear force, we must keep in mind the frightful consequences resulting from the use of such weapons. The very threat posed by them is capable of exerting a decisive influence on the enemy's will to go to war and their use, in case of mortal peril may plunge the world into atomic holocaust. This means that the definitions of the missions and the actual go-signal for the strategic nuclear force must be up to the Chief of State himself or, if he should not be available, this should be handled by persons charged with this responsibility in advance.

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Should the targets assigned to the strategic nuclear force be demographic and industrial objectives, that is to say, cities, or military objectives, in other words, communications centers or enemy missile launching sites? The echo from the discussions on this subject between responsible Americans has reached France. But as far as we in France are concerned, such a debate is meaningless as far as the possible use of our national nuclear force is concerned. Considering the weapons systems available to us, the only targets that would have a deterrent value would be demographic targets; it would be absurd to think that we could try to hit enemy missile batteries.

Since we do not want to be the aggressors, we will have to be informed of enemy aggression as quickly as possible so that we may decide what counteraction to take and get our strike off the ground effectively. Alert and commitment of strategic forces are based on a knowledge of action taken by the adversary and on the almost instantaneous use of information received. Because of its detection equipment and automatic information processing equipment, our air defense setup should be in a position to supply the government with the necessary background for making a decision. The air defense operations center collects information received from our own and from allied sources; it enables the government to use this information in order to advise the strategic air force operations center within a matter of minutes.

It is of course understood that minimum protection of our armed forces against attacks from the air remains one of the missions -- the most classical mission, that is -- of our air defense system which is thus charged with policing the sky in time of peace.

In support of its mission, our air defense system has seven radar detection stations which are being modernized and nine interceptor squadrons.

We must anticipate that some responsible officers charged with firing nuclear weapons may be the cause of accidents due to mental derangement or criminal intent -- or, on the other hand, they might be restrained from pushing the button because of moral scruples. This means that we will have to take special security measures; we will have to create two chains of command, one for the delivery vehicles and the other for the bombs and warheads as such; both of these would have to get their orders simultaneously but separately and immediately prior to the release of bombs or the launching of missiles; we will have to install black boxes on board aircraft or missiles and these devices will have to be capable of neutralizing the weapon; they will also have to be directly remote-controlled by the political authority that orders the attack.

In any case, we cannot base our military policy solely on the

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possession of strategic nuclear weapons. We must also have forces that can be employed more flexibly and that can be used in more limited action; these are the forces of intervention, as we may call them, in other words, our second system of forces.

The intervention forces are land, naval, and air forces capable of going into action quickly; their mission is to fight and stop an enemy who is attacking France or his allies in a nuclear or conventional war.

These forces must be capable of going into action in Europe or outside Europe; they may be committed within the Atlantic Alliance or outside the Alliance.

Our ground forces will supply six divisions to the intervention forces (or, more accurately, six division slices) five of which will be lighter than the 1959-type division (the 1959-type division consists of three reinforced-mechanized or motorized brigades); the sixth, more specifically intended for overseas employment, will be of a different type and will be capable of parachute, airborne, or amphibious action. These divisions will be equipped with modern weapons and materiel and this will enable them to fight both under the threat of atomic warfare or in atomic war as such; this in turn requires great mobility and equipment with tactical atomic weapons.

Now, where are we in this program? Right now, we have six brigades in Germany -- equivalent to two divisions -- and these units are full-strength; their equipment has been modernized, except with respect to medium tanks and some special equipment. Over the past 18 months, we reorganized three light divisions in France from units repatriated from Algeria: the 7th Armored, the 8th Motorized and the 11th Infantry divisions (which will be used as the overseas strike division). These divisions will in the beginning have two brigades but they will have three brigades in 1963. The modernization of their arms and equipment will proceed somewhat more slowly and they will not reach the current level of the divisions in Germany until 1965. As far as atomic armament is concerned, the divisions stationed in Germany are equipped with "Honest John" missiles and the necessary nuclear warheads, of course, under American control.

At the end of the second phase of the program, toward 1970, the land component of the strike or intervention force will consist of about 150,000 men, 3,000 armored vehicles, 25,000 supply and liaison vehicles, and 350 helicopters. Starting in 1970, we are planning to equip this force with French-made tactical atomic arms.

The ground units will very often have to fight a combined air-

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and-ground battle; it will therefore be necessary for our airforce to participate in our strike or intervention force. At this time, this participation primarily takes the shape of the 1st Tactical Air Corps and the Military Air Transport Command.

The 1st Tactical Air Corps, which now has 23,000 men, consists of one reconnaissance squadron, seven fighter squadrons equipped with jets (F-84 and RF-84, F-100, Mirage III), as well as two "Nike" ground-to-air missile brigades.

A second tactical air corps is now being set up with units and equipment repatriated from Algeria and will operate in support of the divisions stationed in metropolitan France; it has, among others, two squadrons of transport helicopters (H-34) and two fighter squadrons (one jet squadron, one piston squadron).

The military air transport unit has an instant airlift capacity of 400 t and is equipped with 172 Nord 2501, 37 C-47, and 4 DC-6. Our program does not call for an increase in the airlift tonnage but the quality of the equipment will be improved with the use of the Transall, starting in 1966; this aircraft has a large cargo capacity and its speed and radius of action are very much greater than those of the Nord 2501.

The third component of the strike or intervention force will be the navy with its air and sea units. Almost all of our naval air and sea units should be categorized among the intervention forces -- except, of course, for the small coastal surveillance vessels or minesweepers, which have a home defense mission, as well as the atomic missile-launching submarines, when we have them.

These forces consist of 250,000 t of shipping and 270 interceptor aircraft as well as assault and antisubmarine helicopters, organized into two squadrons, one based in the Mediterranean and the other in the Atlantic; the exact distribution of the equipment between these two squadrons will be developed over the coming years. The principle mission of these naval forces is to assure the security of our maritime communications in the western Mediterranean and in the northeast Atlantic, to defend our coasts against attacks from the sea and assure the transport and support of amphibious operations conducted by land units of the intervention force.

The command of the intervention forces poses some very complicated organizational problems; we need one single French military commander to head the French forces from all arms involved in a particular theatre of operations; but, at the same time, we must think of the principle theatres and especially of Europe and in this connection we must take into account our neighbors with whom we are united by the bonds of formal alliances such as the Atlantic Alliance.

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But the situation is most complicated in Western Europe; in time of peace, the Atlantic Alliance has a supreme headquarters under whose control are forces made available to the Alliance by the member nations. As far as France is concerned these are land forces stationed in Germany and constituting the First Army, as well as the air units of the 1st Tactical Air Corps, which I discussed earlier. This entire force -- which we shall continue to modernize but which we do not intend to augment -- is far from negligible; it puts France in third place, after the United States and Germany, and before Great Britain.

The French land and air intervention forces do not belong to these two major units (First Army and 1st Tactical Air Corps) and constitute a national reserve which, in time of peace and in time of war, is under French command. For instance, the units stationed in metropolitan France and in North Africa, in time of war, would be under the Commander in Chief, Metropolitan-Mediterranean Theatre; units stationed in overseas zones 1, 2, and 4 would be under the Commander in Chief, Central Africa; units stationed in overseas zone 3 and in Djibouti would be under the Commander in Chief, Indian Ocean; finally the forces in the South Pacific would be under the Commander in Chief, Pacific.

The high-seas air and naval forces, when at sea, would be under the authority of the Chief of Naval Operations, except for those which the government puts at the disposal of a theatre commander.

The third system of forces, the territorial operational defense forces, are assigned the mission of wiping out enemy units which might succeed in landing on French soil or which might try, by any means or in any form whatever, to penetrate French soil.

These forces consist of units of the army and the air force (plus some elements of the navy) which exist in time of peace and which would be heavily reinforced by wartime mobilization.

For the territorial operational defense forces, the army will furnish about a dozen regional brigades (basically, one brigade for each military region) with a strength of 5,000 men, which would be full-strength in peace time, and about a hundred subdivisional regiments (basically, one for each department) which will be mobilized on the basis of one company constituting, in peace time, the active nucleus and the mobilization center for this regiment. The entire territorial operational defense force is of course supported by the vast network of information and public safety represented by the departmental and mobile gendarmerie (state troopers).

An Alpine brigade is now being set up in the VIII Military

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Region; some units about the size of another brigade will be set up in 1963 in the Massif Central and along the periphery; five other brigades will be organized in 1965 and the rest will be set up in 1967 in regions where strong military concentrations urgently require the presence of territorial brigades and where the establishment of such units is more difficult to handle.

The regional air commands will participate with 10 light support squadrons; these air units will be attached to the territorial operational defense force and will be under the authority of the defense zone commanders. The Air Defense Command will support them with all its detection equipment and, possibly, with its active air units that are capable of interception or support.

The command of the land units of the territorial operational defense force, in time of peace, is held by the military region commanders and by the commanders of air units, by the air region commanders or by the commander of the territorial air defense force. In case of conflict, the territorial operational defense force will be under the orders of the Commander in Chief, Metropolitan-Mediterranean Theatre of Operations; this general officer, on taking command, will thus have intervention forces under him (with the exception of those that are under NATO and those which the government is holding in reserve), as well as all the territorial operational defense force units as such.

We must emphasize that the territorial operational defense forces are not territorial regiments charged, as in 1914-1918, with guarding communications lines or with minor static missions determined by civil authorities; these will be combat units capable of attacking heavily-armed enemy units which may have landed on French soil; the units of the territorial operational defense force, when necessary, must be able to operate as Maquis in order to continue a war if the first battles should have turned out badly for us. This means that they will have to have good cadres, good troops, and good weapons; of course, we are not planning to equip them with atomic weapons but we are going to give them the kind of weapons and communications equipment which will enable them to fight a conventional war or a commando or guerilla war; this means they are also going to have antitank weapons and weapons against light armored vehicles, such as light scout cars, for example. As for logistics, they will live off the land and they will have to be capable of rapidly adapting themselves to guerilla conditions.

Well trained, well equipped, the units of the territorial operational defense force will have an operational mission. In case of war or in case of war scare, their military commanders would not have to shoulder the entire responsibility for domestic defense, police functions, transportation, food supply, and so on; it is of course

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possible that extreme circumstances might make it necessary to place all of these responsibilities on the shoulders of a military commander, for example, in regions in which the enemy has a foothold, but this would only be the exception.

On that point, our colonial experience in Indo-China and Algeria cannot be applied in France. In Asia and Africa we were fighting in a different population environment; in other words, the people there differed from ours as regards race, religion, civilization, and so on and they were often working on the side of our enemies or, at best, they were indifferent; outside the cities, the French administration had never been numerous or solidly established and it was often swept away at the beginning of the uprising. It was therefore normal and necessary for the military commander to take over as administrator, in place of the civil administration which either had collapsed or which had disappeared. In France, the situation would of course be vastly different; the French would not work for the invaders and the French administration is so complex and so ramified down to the level of counties and communities that it would be impossible for the military commander to take its place there.

In order to have any chance of success, domestic defense must be based on the popular will to resist the enemy; every man must hold his post and do his duty. In domestic defense, the operational defense mission is paramount in case of conflict; it is very important in peace time because good domestic defense, by giving depth to the battlefield, strengthens our deterrent policy. If the enemy cannot hope to defeat France with a single blow along with all of Western Europe, in a battle in Germany, he will hesitate to commit himself to a long war which might lead to terrible complications.

Good territorial operational defense is one of the pillars of national defense.

What are the consequences of our military policy on the armed forces?

These consequences will be vast but they are barely beginning to make themselves felt because the colonial wars have delayed the modernization of our armed forces -- especially the ground forces -- and because nuclear weapons have just been introduced into our arsenal.

Nuclear weapons have brought a revolution in strategy and in tactics (consequently, there have also been changes in unit organization and command, as well as in personnel and unit training); the production of nuclear weapons calls for a radical change in our arms production program. This nuclear revolution will be much more far-reaching and much faster than

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the one that was brought about by the use of powder on the battlefields, starting in the 14th century.

In order not to make this article too long, I will discuss only those consequences of our military policy which concern personnel and materiel in our armed forces.

From now on, the strength of an army or of a fleet will no longer be measured only by the number of divisions or ships of the line but above all by the number of megatons which they can launch successfully against enemy targets.

For the first time in the military history of France, mere numbers of men are not a priority matter; the number in each age category, as well as the duration and type of military service are still subjects for discussion, though mostly for general policy reasons, rather than for military policy purposes.

Our long-range plan calls for less than 500,000 men in peace time, not including gendarmerie, for the three services; this figure which is smaller than the figure specified in our original plans, is not too high for a country which soon will have 50 million inhabitants; but it is still too high if we are not capable of equipping these men with modern arms and materiel and teaching them how to use this equipment.

Mobilization will of course continue to be necessary for territorial defense but it is only a supporting factor which is of significance to the intervention forces but which is negligible as far as the strategic nuclear forces are concerned. This is why our plans call for the mobilization of 1 million men, in case of war, as against 4 million in 1939.

While we must limit the number of men, we cannot compromise on their quality. To get this kind of quality, we must concentrate on recruitment and training.

The recruitment of cadres and troops can, for example, be improved by stricter physical selection standards which would eliminate one fourth of those summoned before they ever joined up (as against about 15% in past years); we could also improve recruitment by raising our IQ requirements for cadres entering military schools.

General and technical training must be developed and brought up to date; more and more men must get this training on all levels of command. Of course, as we increase our training effort, we will have to spend more time and more money on it; the training of a commissioned

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jet pilot costs 400,000 Francs, that of a commissioned antitank gunner for the EMRAC gun costs 85,000 Francs, and that of a tank driver costs 35,000 Francs. Because of the duration and cost of training, the vast majority of cadres and specialists will have to be career soldiers; this is why, despite the reduction in the number of men, we do not plan to have a decrease in the number of officers and we are going to try to recruit more noncommissioned officers. Our training program will therefore have to strengthen formal discipline, which is always necessary, as well as intellectual discipline which is now required in the command of modern armies, of fast and powerful but fragile units -- fragile because they are always exposed to crushing blows.

These commanders and these units must receive the best arms. Each year, arms and equipment production becomes more urgent, more difficult, and more expensive. In the 25 years from 1938 to 1963, the per-ton price, expressed in constant Franc figures, has doubled for tanks, tripled for ships, and quintupled for aircraft. An article in February 1962 (Revue de Deux Mondes (Two-World Review), 15 February 1962), I listed the prices of some of these equipment items; I would like to add that a ton of explosives costs 50-100 times less in the form of an atomic bomb than in the form of conventional explosives in howitzers, charged with tolite, for example since the thermonuclear bomb per ton of explosives, is much less expensive than the atomic bomb.

Contrary to widespread opinion, research and production of weapons destined for the strategic nuclear force (A-bomb, Pierrelatte plant, aircraft, rockets, and so on) represent less than 13% of the military budget and will not amount to 25% of that budget until toward the end of this decade. By way of comparison Great Britain puts only 10% of its military expenditures -- which are otherwise greater than ours -- into nuclear armaments.

But all arms, even the so-called conventional arms, must keep up with technological progress and must be adapted to the implacable requirements of nuclear weapons whose threat exists everywhere and at all times. Our units will need tactical mobility without which they cannot escape destruction; this is why we need cross-country trucks, tracked vehicles, combat helicopters and, for the air force, VTOL aircraft. The command must have a flexible and fast information system such as radar, supersonic reconnaissance aircraft, drones (small, remote-controlled aircraft which are equipped with cameras and which are sent on reconnaissance missions -- the latest models of these drones provide for aerial observation of terrain via television), and even satellites; they need reliable communications networks which must be widespread and have a high message transmission capacity.

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Power, complexity, and high cost are the characteristics of modern weapons and equipment which are going to be further accentuated as we go along.

To procure all these weapons and equipment, we will have to spend more money each year and, considering the reduction in numbers of men, we will have to spend more and more of our military funds for these purposes. In 1946, the armed forces budget took 16% of these expenditures for supporting facilities and arms; in 1963, the figure will be 42.5% and we will have to go as high as 50% in order to implement our program.

It is of course logical to think that research and arms production, in an alliance, should be handled jointly by all the allies or by some of them together. As a matter of fact, the Atlantic Alliance has created great expectations in this field and has promoted some projects such as the production of the antiaircraft missile, the Hawk, in Europe, and the construction of the Atlantic antisubmarine aircraft, not to mention other projects in which France was involved. But this cooperation has not developed too well because of national rivalry, especially in the industrial domain and above all because anything touching on atomic weapons is excluded from this.

We have decided to have our own atomic weapons; this means that we will have to make them ourselves and, for this great job, we must appeal not only to our military engineers and to our arms plants, but also to the civilian scientists, engineers, and technicians of our country; the more we modernize our armed forces the closer will these bonds have to be between the civil and military scientific and technological community. At the same time, we will feel the effects of military policy on the life of the nation much more strongly, even in peace time.

The detractors of our government like to keep emphasizing the tremendous size and rapid growth of French military expenditures.

We might note in passing that our military budget is large; after all, it amounts to 18.5 billion Francs; (for purposes of international statistics, we would have to add to this our expenditure for military retirement and various other defense expenditures which would bring the entire budget up to 20.5 billion or thereabouts); although this is true, there is nothing unusual about this; and we might say that the proportion of military expenditures out of the entire government budget (22%) has been constantly decreasing for several years; besides the chunk it takes out of the gross national product is only 7.4%.

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Thus we see that these criticisms are in reality directed against the very principle behind our defense effort and those people who yesterday complained about the long duration of military service are the same people who today say that our arms expenditures are too high.

In France, as in other countries in Western Europe, public opinion still judges these expenditures according to the standards of the liberal or Marxist economists of the 19th century; on the basis of various opposing theories, these economists agreed on one point: they all said that military expenditures had no economic utility at all. Now, these doctrines no longer explain our present-day reality. A careful and objective analysis shows that, in a developed country, the expenditures for the modernization of an army to a major and growing degree, are more in the nature of investments that are economically and socially profitable and that also benefit the nation as a whole.

A large portion of our military expenditures goes directly back into the national economy (8.7 billion Francs in 1961; 9.2 billion in 1962; 10.2 billion in 1963) in the form of contracts and orders placed with arms industries, aircraft construction plants, shipyards, electrical and electronics plants, etc. These contracts involve a large portion of our very modern industries and, within them involve the most advanced techniques available. In 1962, the military budget allocated 1 billion Francs to research of all kinds, from basic research all the way to prototypes for the past 25 years, in all developed countries, technological progress has helped the industrial civilizations make great strides and has been spurred on by military needs. In France, the Atomic Energy Commission gets 60% of its funds from the military budget; our civilian space programs (the French program and the European program in which we are participating) would be impossible if they were not supported by military programs involving the construction of rockets used as launch vehicles.

It is an illusion to believe that it would be easy to transfer military expenditures over to civilian scientific or technological research; experience shows that the savings made in military expenditures almost always help finance consumer expenditures.

People very frequently overlook the fact that, out of military expenditures which are not directly funneled back into the national economy -- in other words 8.3 billion in 1963 (18.5 minus 10.2 equals 8.3) representing principally wage and allowance expenditures -- almost one fourth is used for the general and technical training of personnel of the Defense Department and provides for France the engineers and technicians we need; this effort involves the Polytechnical.

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College, the Maritime Engineering School, the Explosives School, the Higher National School of Aeronautics, the medical corps schools, the preparatory schools, and the technical schools; all of these schools turn out more civil engineers and technicians than military ones. Almost 20% of the military personnel are involved here as cadre, instructors or students, in the general or technical schools or training centers (excluding of course the military schools as such, for instance, St. Cyr) -- and almost 10% of the military budget is spent on these schools; no one can deny that the nation benefits greatly from this training effort, as does for instance the military medical corps which uses almost 250 million Francs per year and is also in charge of civilian medical and hospital services.

Altogether, more than one third of our military expenditures are used for education or investment. This proportion will increase as we make progress in the modernization of our armed forces.

Modernization is expensive; military expenditures, though limited to a constant portion out of the gross national product, are increasing in absolute value and the figure will increase by about 1 billion until 1970.

Because of their vast volume and influence on the life of the nation, military expenditures, in peace time, lead to a situation where armament and equipment production programs must become part of national planning. This is why we will coordinate the fifth plan and the second law of the military program from 1966 to 1970.

Who, in all of France, will profit from this new policy involved in our military expenditures?

The establishments which get the principle investments necessary for our program are the Atomic Energy Commission, the arsenals of the ground forces and the navy, the powder plants, the national aircraft construction companies, all of them government enterprises in various forms; their development enhances the nation as a whole and gives the public authorities more means of intervention in the economy.

As for the people themselves, the distribution of profits is not equal. Several categories of Frenchmen will have a greater share than the others in the armed forces modernization project and will thus derive more benefit from this; but these will not be the plant managers and the stockholders, nor the farmers and businessmen, nor the civil servants or military personnel, all of whom are so numerous in modern societies; the people who will benefit most from this will be the technicians, in the largest sense of the word, that is to say, scientists, engineers, and specialists of all kinds whose authority in the armed

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forces and throughout the nation will continue to grow.

But our military policy is having its effect not only on the national economy and on the training of cadres; it already has exerted influence and will continue to exert more and more influence on the opinion of Frenchmen as to the problems of national defense.

France is an old military nation; we know that we can defend ourselves only with good weapons, that is to say, atomic weapons. A military policy which organizes the production of these weapons will give Frenchmen confidence in themselves and will justify the sacrifices that are demanded of them. A policy which, because of ideology or economy, rejects these measures will lead to a situation where Frenchmen will no longer take an interest in their own defense.

Our military policy in part explains the recent evolution of the political institutions of the nation. I have said why and how the Chief of State should be the only person to determine the use of the strategic nuclear force. The consequence of this, in a democratic system, is that the Chief of State can no longer be elected by several hundred members of Parliament, nor even by a slightly more numerous but still restricted electoral college; he must be elected by the entire nation which he can plunge into the most terrible trials. Our military policy reinforces the other argument in favor of the election of a President of the Republic on the basis of universal suffrage.

To a great degree it thus determines the position of France in Europe and in the world; it is thus one of the essential elements of our foreign policy. This assertion is not new, but it is particularly true today.

In 1949 a decision was made to have France join its European neighbors and the United States in the Atlantic Alliance; this led to the creation of NATO and it failed to lead to the European Defense Community. This alliance has enabled Europe, thanks to American protection, to resist Soviet pressure and to recover materially and even militarily.

From the very beginning, the principal problem of the Atlantic Alliance has been the use of atomic weapons because, after 1945 and for a long time since then, nations have been classified into two categories: those that had nuclear weapons and those that did not. Only the former are capable of defending their freedom and their way of life; the others are condemned to servitude or satellite status.

Our nuclear weapons will not enable us to make France one of the giants of the world; but they will enable France to cease being a

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negligible quantity whenever our vital interests are at stake.

This is why the Americans and the Russians are against the development of national nuclear forces which will make it more difficult for them to pursue their policy of hegemony and jeopardize their results; this is why the nuclear armament of France is at the very core of Franco-American relations.

Later on, this issue will become a primary one in European policy because Europe cannot be built only on the basis of economic and technical communities, no matter how necessary they may be. To enable Europe to exist, someone will have to take charge and assume the responsibility of its defense and, to that end, someone will have to have nuclear weapons. When we get to that point, we will see that France's possession of her own nuclear weapons will be the keystone in the European setup and, because of this, the topic of the most impassioned discussions.

It is easy to draw the conclusion from this article: the main feature of our military policy is the decision adopted by General De Gaulle to give France nuclear weapons and this decision will have the kind of consequences that will determine the destiny of France for a long time to come.

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- 15 -

GOVERNMENT USE ONLY